

3
TO THE MOST
NOBLE AND MOSTE VER

tuouse pryncesse Quene Anne, wyfe vnto the
moste excellent pryncce our moste gras
ciouse soueraygne lord, kynge
HENRY the. VIII. Thomas
mas Elyot knyghte desys
retsh all honour. .



AFTER THAT I
had diligently rad
and considered, the
lyfe and history of
qucene zenobia, a
ladye of mooste fa-
mouse renoume for her excellent
vertues and moste noble courage:
I was ryghte desyrouse, that it
shulde be radde in our owne lan-
guage, wherby women (specially)
moughte be prouoked to imbrace
bertue moze gladly, and to be cir-
cumspete in the byngynge bp of
theyr children, But with that ima-

A.ii.

gina-

The preface.

gination there came also to my remembrance, the vngentyll custom of many men, whiche do set theyr delyte in rebukynge of women, althoughe they neuer receyued displeasure, but often tymes benefyte by theym: y^e whan theyr wanton appetite stereth them, they offer to serue them, and doo extoll them with prayes ferre aboue reason. Whiche thyng I of my nature abhorrynge, Determynd (for the reuerence that all honest men ought to beare to the vertuouse and gentyl sort of good women) to prepare for the a sufficient defence agaynst y^e mouthed reporters. Than forth with entred in to my fantasy the deuise of this lyttell treatyse, wherein I dyd imagine, that the tyme were nowe whan zenobia lyued, whiche was about the yere after the incarnation

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The p̄face.

nation of Chꝛyst. CC.lxxiii. when
also the noble Aureliane was Em-
perour of Rome. And to induce
that noble pꝛynesse to declare her
owne lyfe, I deuised a contention
betwene two gentylmen, the one
named Caninius, the other Can-
didus. Caninius lyke a curre, at
womennes condicions is alwaye
barkynge, but Candidus, whiche
maye be enterpꝛeted benygne oꝝ
gentyll, iudgeth euer wel, and re-
pꝛoueth but seldome: betwene the
two the estimation of womankind
commeth in question. And after
longe dysputation, wherein Candi-
dus (as reason is) hathe the pꝛee-
minence, at the laste foꝝ a pꝛe-
conclusiō, Queene Zenobia by the
example of her lyfe, confirmeth his
argumētes, and also bainquisheth
the obstynate mynde of frowarde

A.iii.

Cant=

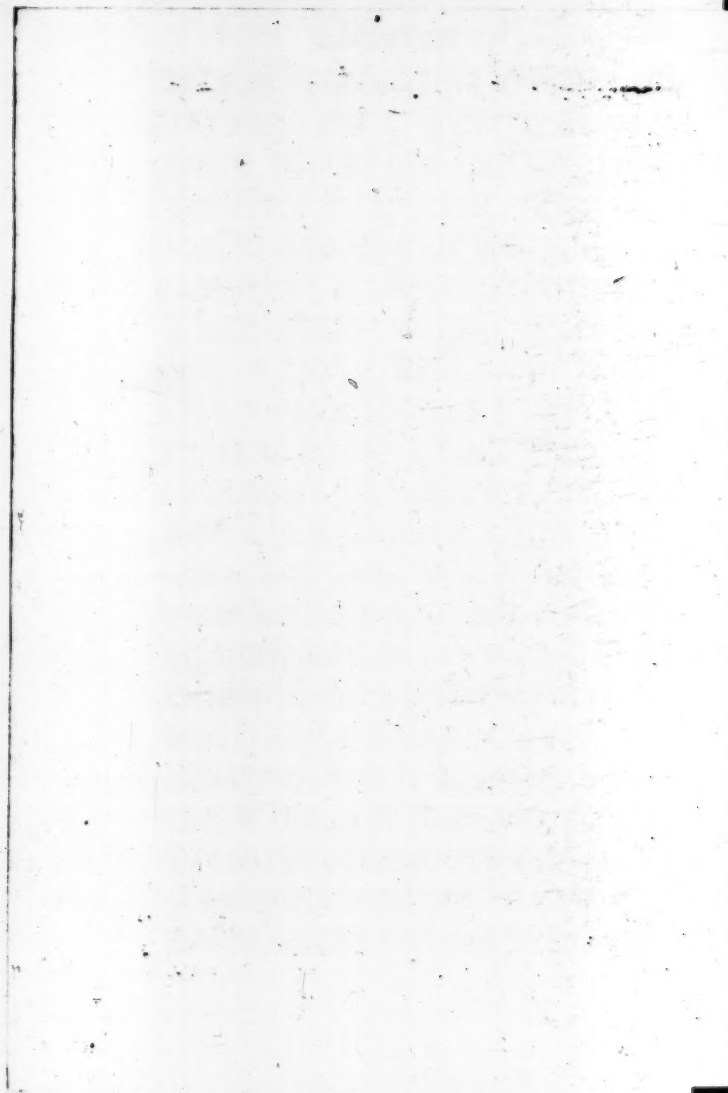
The preface.

Caninius : and so endeth the matter, whiche I doo dedycate vnto your hyghnes mooste noble pyn= cesse, humbly despyng your high= nesse in suche wyse to accepte my good wyll and seruice and this lit= tell warke as your owne, that br= der your gravis protection and fa= uour it may saufely passe throug= the daungerouse case of dysdayne and enuy, and be receyued thank= fully and ioyousely of al good wo= me in this your noble realme, who by the onely example of your excel= lent maiestie, maye be alway desy= rouse to imbrace vertue and gen= tylnesse, wherein consisteth verpe nobilitie.

Often reabyngge
Canisius good vnderstandynge.

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CANINIVS, CANDIDVS, ZENOBIA.

CANINIVS.



V CHE IS THE
condicion of Ve-
nus derlynges, so
longe as they be
styrred with plea-
sant affectiōs, they
be still insensible in the feelynge of
Sapience. Ye all do knowe Can-
didus, kynsman to Aureliane the
emperour that nowe is, an honest
younge gentylman, well lerned and
courtayse, soo that his noblenesse
doth appere in his maners. Yester-
day dyd I see hym deuyssyng with
ladies, wherby I coniected that he
was a louer, and therfore I lamen-
ted. And as he hapned to come by
me, I roured hym in the eare and
B sayde

Defence of

sayde to hym softly: Beware noble ponge man, I perceyue ye beggued, plucke out your legges et the boltes be ryueted. Therat he smyled, and layinge his hande vpon myne, he sayde to me priuely: I wot what ye meane. I pray you be to morowe with me at Tiburtum, whiche is but a lyttell out of the citie, where I haue a fayre and commodiouse lodginge, there shal we soupe with some other gentylmen. And there wyl I vanquiste your wylfull oppynion conceyued agaynst women: or elles I beinge vanquished with sufficient reason, wyl from henseforth leaue al mine affection. And so departed he from me. This is Tiburtum, for ponder is the palayce of Hadrian. well Candidus wyl not be longe, his noble nature wyl not let him breke

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good vvomen.

promyse. for lacke of faythe Defa-
ceth al vertues. CANDIDVS. Ye
spake neuer a moze true sentence,
no: a moze honest. for vndoubted-
ly fayth, which some do call trust,
is of iustice so gret a portion, that
without it neyther god maye be
pleased, no: any weale Publyke
may be surely stablISHED. And they
which do lacke it them selves, with
a lyttell touche broken be not a lit-
tle offended. CANINIVS. It is
truely spoken, and nowe to talke
of the matter, for the which ye wil-
led me to mete with you here is
nowe happened a ryghte good oc-
casyon. CANDI. Ye meane the
matter concernge women, which
we two now haue taken vpon vs.
CANINI. Euen the same master
Candidus. CANDI. Goo to on
goddes name: what haue ye to
B.ii. charge

Defence of

charge with all women? C A N I.
Nay fyrst I praye you tell me one
thyng that I wyl aske of you. Be
not ye of that sect of Philosophers
called Pirhonici? C A N D I. What
meane ye therby? I know not that
secte: yet haue I sene a good part
of philosophye. C A N I. It is the
sect which affirmeth, that nothing
is in dede as it seemeth to be, say-
inge, that snowe is blacke and not
whyte, the erthe is not stable but e-
uer mouinge, & many an other fro-
warde affection, contrary to truth
and al common reason. C A N D I.
No no Caninius, I neuer fauou-
red suche bayne opinion. C A N I.
yet many one dothe, chaungynge
onely the termes. for sene snowe is
so ofte times sene, they feare to say
that it is blacke, lest they shulde
therfore be laughed to scope. But
vertue

good vvomen.

vertue, who is not so commonly
seene, and of soo many men looked
on, is nowe of dyuerse men so per-
uersely esteemed, that it is of some
called folly, of many men fantasy,
and of some curiositie. Also the fa-
uourers therof are lyttell sette by,
as persones vnprofytable and no-
thyng worldly. But to our pur-
pose, I asked of you, if ye were of
the secte called Pirhonic, for if ye
so were, I wolde thynke it vayne
to reason thence with you. But ye
saye, ye be not of that secte, than is
it as I sayde at my fyrst comming
hyther. C A N D I. What is that I
praye you? C A N I. ye that be lo-
uers be dull and insensyble in fee-
lynge of Sapience. for althoughe
ye be infourmed by dayely expery-
ence, that in woman kynde faythe
neuer rested, yet be you styll as

B.iii. blynde

Defence of

blind as your litel god Cupide. for
the chyldishe affections whiche ye
beare to your ladyes, causeth you
to thynke the thynges which ye se,
to be nothyng but vanities. C A N.
Nowe in good faith that is merily
spoke. C A. Wel yet, some haue re-
pented them bitterly, fyndyng the
lynke sodainly broken, and in the
stede of fayth fallshode & trechery.
C A N. Nay ye uow do but rayle &
promyse you truely. In dede both
by reading & heresay I haue found
women moch blamed for theyr in-
constancy: but for mine own know-
lege I neuer perceyued any suche
lacke to be in them, but rather the
contrary. C A. Sye by the consent
of al auctours my wordes be con-
firmed, and your experiēce in com-
parison therof is to be lyttell este-
med. C A N D L. I perceiue ye be of
the

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good vvomen.

the company, which dyssapoynted
sometime of your purpose, are fal-
len in a frenesy, and for the disple-
sure of one, do spyng on al womē
the payson of infamye. But nowe
Caninius, sense ye be wise and wel
lerned, subdue your passion. for vn-
patient hering, with wordes haste-
ly & vnadvisedly spoken, is a signe
of foly and litel discretiō. wherfore
now here me speke though it shal
not sauour to your opinion. The
authoꝝs whom ye so moche do set
by, for the moze part were poetes,
which sort of persōs among the la-
tines & grekes were neuer had but
in smal reputatiō. for I could ne-
uer rede that in any weale publike
of notable memoꝝy, Poetes were
called to any honoꝝable place, of-
fice, or dignite. plato out of the pub-
like weale whiche he had deuysed,

B.iiii.

wolde

Defence of

wolde haue all poetes vtterly excluded. Culli, who next vnto Plāto excelled all other in vertue and eloquence, wolde not haue in his publyke weale any poetes admitted. The cause why they were soo lyttell esteemed was, for as moche as the more parte of theyꝝ inuencions consysted in leasynges, or in sterynge vp of wanton appetytes, or in pourynge oute, in raplynge, theyꝝ popson of malyce. For with theyꝝ owne goddes and goddesses were they so malaparte, that with theyꝝ aduoutries they fylled great volumes. Iupiter, whom they cal kynge of goddes and of men, they byynge hym out of heauen to his harlottes transfourmed somtyme in to a bull, an other tyme lyke a ramme, a stynkynge gote or a serpente. His queene Iuno lyke a
cowe,

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good vvomen.

colwe, Mercurius lyke a wulfe. **A**s
they lefte heauen vnpolluted, fai-
nyng that the god Mars made
Vulcane cokeolde, commyttynge
aduoutrye with Venus, wyfe to
Vulcanus. But Vulcane was a
wply pye and sayde nothyng, but
beinge a smythe, he made such sut-
tell manakles, that er the two lo-
uers were ware, he tyed theym so
faste to gether, that they moughte
not be seuered: and than called he
the hole route of goddes and god-
deses, and made them to se Mars
and Venus where they lay naked,
wherat they al lewghe, but Mars
was angry and Venus almoste a-
shamed. Other poetes there be,
whiche in theyr mozte lamentable
and wofull ditties so doo humble
them selves to theyr maistresses, as
they wolde lycke the duste frome
B.v. theyr

Defence of

they? Clyppers, and as sone as ey-
ther by age, or with hauntynge of
b2othelles, the flame of carnalitie
is througely quenched, or elles if
women do constantly refuse they?
vnhonest despyres, anone arme they
they? penne and tungen with ser-
pentyne malyce, obiecting against
al women most beastly conditions.
Wherby they moze detect their pro-
pre inconstancy than womens vn-
faythefulnesse. CANI. Nowe in
good faythe ye haue well circum-
scribed your maysters properties.
CANDI. Whom call ye my may-
sters? CANI. Many poetes. for
in they? warkes is the onely study
of you that be louers. for that
booke, which lacketh complayntes
with wepynges and sighinges, is
to you men that be amorous won-
derfull tediousse, CANDI. True-
ly Ca-

good vvomen.

ly Caninius ye are moche abused,
takynge me to be of that sorte of
wantons. Nay truely, Trewe lo-
uers, of which company I confesse
my selfe to be one, are in no parte
of theyr conditions. for onely deli-
tyng in the honest behauour, wise-
dome and gentylnesse of ladies, or
other matrones or damselles, we
therfore desyre to be in theyr com-
panies, and by mutuall deuisinge
to vse honest solace. But shewe me
Caninius, what other auctorytie
haue ye, to proue that in womenne
lacketh fidelitie. CANI. Why set
ye so lyttell by poetes and poetrye?
CANDI. Ye whan they excede the
termes of honestye. But if they
make verses conteynynge quicke
sentences, boyd of rybauldry, or in
the commendation of vertue, some
praty allegory, or do set forth any
notable

Defence of

notable story, than do I set by the
as they be well worthy. C A N I. If
ye wyl gyue no credence to poetes,
what saye ye to philosophers and
wyters of stories, with whome ye
maye fynde suche abundaunce of
examples and sentences of the fall
hode of women and theyr unhap=
pinesse, that if they shuld be reher=
sed, I trowe ye wold not abyde it,
I knowe soo your shamefastnesse.
C A N D I. Truly none of theym,
which were them selves honest and
continent, haue wyrtten in dys=
praise of the hole kinde of women.
What hath Plato, Xenophon, Plo=
tinus, and Plutarch, or other phi=
losophers lyke vnto them wyrtten
in that matter, wherby they haue
made them inferiour to men? or if
they haue in womenne any thinge
blamed, it may appere to be but in
some

good vvomen.

Some, and not in the moze parte, if
it be wel and syncerely considered.
And also in stozies where one wo-
man perchaunce is foꝛ some fault
dispraysed, that is counterpeysed
with a great numbꝛe foꝛ theyꝛ ver-
tue commended. Now I pray you,
was Helene, foꝛ whom Troy was
destroyed (beinge rauished by Pa-
ris) so moch to be blamed, as Her-
cintia the wyfe of Romulus, and
moze than a thousand of her com-
panions, are to be praysed, whiche
in the rage of batayle ioynd be-
twene their husbandes and paren-
tes, so reconciled theym, that with
one consent they inhabited one ci-
tie, and lyued to gether in perpetu-
all vnitie. Ought the vnchastitie
of any woman to be so remembꝛed,
as the continence of queene Bene-
lope oughte to be honoꝛed, who in
the

Defence of

the absence of Ulixes her husbande,
the space of. xx. yeres, kept her ho-
nour and fame vncorrupted, not-
withstandinge that with many di-
uerse woluers she was dayely as-
saulted, but by no maner of meane
moughte she be founden, by dede
word nor countenance in her chaste
purpose vnconstant. And to resist
carnall affections, she was alway
sene, althoughe she were a queene
and a kinges daughter, vertuous-
lye occupied. What cause founde
Paris to forsake his first lady De-
none, but only that the beaulty of
Helene was moche more famous?
And yet his cruell vnkyndenesse
mought not exclude loue from her
gentyll harte, but she remayninge
still continente, after that Paris
was slayne by Achilles, she with
exclamations & effusions of teares
entred

good vvomen.

entred into the chariotte where his
carcaise lay, and when she had bat- *
ned her fayre lyppes in his putri-
fied woundes, and had saciate hir
selfe with mortall solace, fynallye
she there died oppressed with heui-
nesse. But bicause these be of some
men taken for fables, I wyl brief-
ly declare the faythfulnesse of dy-
uerse womenne rehersed in stozies.
In the host of the noble kynge Ci-
rus, was a great pryncce (as Xeno-
phon wyrteth) whose name was
Abzatades, whoo had to his wyfe
a fayre lady named Panthea of ex-
cellent beaulty, this pryncce beinge
slayne in batayle, she attaynyng
his body, and with her owne han-
des washyng the woundes, and
imbaulminge it after the facion of
her owne countrey, she in the pre-
sence of Cyrus, with a knife, which
she

Defence of

She had priuely hyddde, sempyng in
wordes and countenance desirous
to be with her husband, whom she
mooste tenderly loued, she perced
her owne harte, and with him was
buried: not withstandynge that of
kyng Cyrus, whom her husband
had moche praysed a lyttel befoze,
she was in mariage despyred. Por-
cia, doughter to the wise Cato, and
wyfe vnto Brutus, whan she had
harde of the deathe of her husband
fynding occasion to be alone from
her seruantes, she takynge the hote
burnynge coles out of a chymney,
deuoured them hastely, and forth-
with died. Also whan Seneca by
the sentence of the cruell Nero the
emperour, was condemned to die,
his wife called Paulina, despyrous
to be continuall companion with
her olde husbände, caused also her
beynes

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good vvomen.

beines to be perced, & so wold haue
died, had not Nero commaunded
her baynes to be bounde, and the
bloude to be stopped, she notwithstanding
standynge afterwarde lyued in so-
rowe contynuall moze paynefull
than deathe, and durynge her lyfe,
her dedly pale colour declared to
all men, whiche befoze knewe her,
the bytter sorowes, whiche for her
husbande she alway susteyned. In
the tyme of the cruell confederacy
of Lepidus, Octaulane, and An-
tony, a gentylman called Ligary-
us, was by his wife and a mayden
seruant, kept at Rome in his house
priuely: but what for feare of pu-
nishemente, and hope of rewarde,
he at the last was discovered, who
beinge ledde to be beheded, his lo-
uyng wyfe continually folowed,
desyrynge the ministers to put her

C

also

Defence of

also to death with her husband, al-
legging that also to die she had wel
deserued, for as moche as she had
kept her husbände at home, after
that she knew that he was attain-
ted: but seinge that no man dydde
take regarde to her hartie requeste,
she returned home to her house, &
shutting fast all the doores, and
absteyninge from all meates and
drynkes, fynally with soowen and
fampyne she ended her lyfe, and de-
parted to her husbände, whom she
so moche loued. But lest we shuld
be to longe from our supper, I wil
cesse to recite any mo stories, wher-
of there be no lytel numbꝛe, decla-
ryng the constance of ladyes and
damselles. And if ye wolde saye,
that there hath ben and is a moche
greatest numbꝛe of theym that are
yll, and full of vnfaythfulnesse, yet
if

good vvomen.

if that were true, than must ye consider, that in al kyndes of thinges, are comunonly founde moze warse than better, oꝛ elles shoulde good thynge lacke theyꝛ estimation, as it shall appere by this conclusion. foꝛ he that neuer hath seene any o- ther metall than golde, maruay- leth not at it, noꝛ in his estimation setteth moch by it. And where there be none other stoones founde but Diamandes, Saphires, Eme- rauldes, and Rubyes, there men do treade on theym, and sell them foꝛ trifles. But if one shulde come to a countre, whiche semed bar- rayne, couered with an infynyte numbꝛe of stones ragged, of yll co- lour and facion, if he chaunce to fynde here and there a poynted Di amande, well proporcioned and o- rient: I dare saye, he wyl laye by
C.ii. those

Defence of

those fewe Diamandes as a great treasure, and not remembryng the ragged stones, in the beholdynge of theym take noo lyttell pleasure. Semblably althoughe a greatte numbze of women perchance were victouse, yet oughte not a man reproche therfore the hole kynde of women, sense of them vndoubtedly many be vertuose. CANINI. Ye haue wel assembled thinges for your purpose. But what saye you to Aristotel, whom ye haue skpyte ouer, in the namynge of philosophers: he sayth, that a woman is a worke of nature vnperfecte. And more ouer, that her propertie is to delyte in rebukynge, and to be alway complayning, and neuer contented. Nowe take heede mayster Candidus. Perfection is euer constante and neuer chaungeth, but a woman

διλολδ
 λόρον
 αίμεμ
 τίμοι
 ρον.

good vvomen.

woman is a creatue vnperfite, she
 therfore may neuer be stable or con-
 stante. ye knowe this fourme of
 argument, for I espy by your tal-
 kyng ye are lerned in logike. More-
 ouer, rebukynge is a mislykynge,
 and no man mislyketh the thyng
 that he loueth, but all that he lo-
 ueth he fauoureth and lyketh, but
 women of theyr nature do delite in
 rebukynge, and the thyng wher-
 in any person deliteth, he coueteth,
 and coueitynge it he wil at the last
 (if it be in his power) execute it.
 women therfore lackinge some o-
 ther, on whom they maye practyse
 theyr propertie, wyl rebuke some
 time theyr husbandes, whom per-
 chaunce they loued: and than mis-
 lyketh she the thing that she erst lo-
 ued. wherfore ye muste graunte,
 that she is vncoustante. Also who
 that

Defence of

that is neuer contente, maye neuer
be constant, the cause why is to all
men apparant. Wherfoze there ne-
deth not any moze argument, wo-
men foze these reasons that I haue
reherfed, be of theyze nature alway
vnconstant. is it not thus? Nowe
* knacke me that nut mayster Can-
didus. I trowe it be to harde foze
your teth, although ye were as wel
tothed as Curins Detatus, which
as men say, helde faste a shyp with
his tethe vntyl it was take. CAN.
In good saythe Caninius ye are a
mery companion. But although
my tethe be not so strong, yet shal
I soo vse my tunge in the stede of
my tethe, that I wyll therwith o-
pen your cobnut, that to all theym
that wyl be contented with reason,
it shall appere well, that it is ppp-
ped. CANINI. In saythe ye be a
mete

good vvomen.

mete aduocate foꝛ women, sense ye haue tethe in your tunge, foꝛ lyke- wise haue they all, if they be toth- lesse. C A N D I. And it semeth that ye lacke teth to hold in your tunge that it go not to lauesse. But nowe * wyll I assay to knacke your nutte maister Caninius. vvhere ye sayd, that of a purpose I skrypt ouer A- ristotel, there ye sayde truely, In good faith so did I. And here haue at your blockehouse, oute of the whiche is shot agaynste women al this artillery. Syꝛ whan I assy- med, that none of the philosophers which were honest and continent, wꝛate any thynge in dysprayse of womankynde, I remembꝛed euen than your master Aristotel, and iu- ged hym not woꝛthye to be of that numbꝛe, but his repoyte moch lesse to be regarded, than the fayninges

C.iiii. of

Defence of
of poetes, whom I haue reherſed,
and for this intente. For Poetes
wrote agaynſte women in wanton
Ditties, to content men with newe
fangled deuises. But the reproche
to women, giuen by Ariſtotel, was
in treatynge of matter wayghty &
ſeriouſe, wherby it appereth, that
the ſaide wordes ſo ſpytefully ſpo-
ken, proceeded only of cankered ma-
lyce, wherunto he was of his owne
nature dyſpoſed, whiche maye be
of them ſhortly perceyued, that be-
holdeth in his warkes, none other
philosopher eſcape vnbuked. Ne-
trewelye he was aſhamed to rente
with rebukes the immortal fame
of Plato his maſter, of whole di-
uine mouth he had twenty yeres
ſucked the moſte ſwete hony of no-
ble philoſophye, whiche malyce
grew of this occaſion, as auncient

good vvomen.

ent authoꝝ haue made therof men-
cion. Foꝛ as moche as where he
was moze curyoule in his appa-
rayle and deckyng, than was con-
uenient to his professiō, also moze
lyght in countenaunce, and disso-
lute in lyuyng, than became an in-
structour of vertue and wisedome,
Plato therfoze preferred other his
scholers befoze hym, which he ve-
ry displeauntly takynge, soughte
occasion to rebuke his master, whā
he was dead, which he neuer darst
while he was lyuyng. That Ari-
stotel was dissolute and also incon-
stante, it may appere by this, whi-
che is wryten of him. foꝛ to Hermia
whiche was his concubine he dyd
sacrifice, & made solemne hymnes
whyle she was lyuyng. Canne ye
compare any madnesse oꝛ folpe, to
this mans abuse and vncōstancye

C. v. May

Defence of

Maye there be so great an abuse,
as to gyue dyuine honours to a
mortall creature, also to an harlot
and common synner: what vncon-
stancy was in hym, whiche calleth
that a creature vnperfyt, to whom
he dyd solenne sacrifice, sange de-
uoute hymnes, and often tymes
kneled: To blasphemie so his god-
desse, ought not this great philo-
sopher be foule ashamed: wher-
fore Caninius by myne aduise, do
ye not leane moze to his authorite,
than vnto truthe, vertue, and ho-
nestie, but consider his nature in-
clyned to malyce, his fonde errour
and bayne curiosite, and that whi-
che ye dysprays in women, appa-
rante inconstancy. CANINI. Ye
haue a great affection to Plato. I
perceyue verely: but wyl ye deny,
that a woman is of her nature vn-
perfecter

19
good vvomen.

perfecte? CANDI. ye mary wyll
I.foz wherin do you note her to be
vnpersfytter? Is it in the soule oꝛ in
the bodye? CANI. In bothe of
them trewely, foꝛ they be weaker
than men, and haue theyꝛ fleshe
softer, lasse heare on theyꝛ visages,
and theyꝛ voyce softer, and as I
haue redde, they haue in some par-
tes of theyꝛ bodyes, theyꝛ boones
fewer. And as concernynge the
soule, they lacke hardynes, and in
peryles are timorous, moze dely-
cate than men, vnapt to paynful-
nesse, except they be therto constrai-
ned, oꝛ steryd by wylfullnesse: And
the wytte, that they haue, is not
substanciall but apphe: neuer flo-
ryshynge but in vngraciousnesse,
oꝛ in trymmyng them selves with
praty deuyses, oꝛ excusynge theyꝛ
faultes with vnstudyed answeres,
oꝛ

Defence of

or in praty mockes or scorneful da-
lypauce, or to inuent mischieues to
saciate theyr malice. In other thin-
ges it is vnapt vnto knowlege, ex-
cepte one or two, which I haue red
of, who in Rome hath pleaded as
Oratours. But that is not to be
maruayled at, sens they beinge in-
structed in eloquence, theyr dome-
sticall exercise, I wyll not say chy-
dyng, maketh them bolde to con-
tende in pleadyng. In the partes
of wisdom and ciuile policy, they
be founden vnapte, and to haue li-
tell capacitie. But theyr moſte vn-
perfection is theyr inconstancye,
whiche procedeth of theyr sayd na-
turall debilitie. For where as the
affection of moche dreade or moch
loue aboundeth, stabilitie lacketh,
and wytte lyttell preuayleth. Con-
trary to this I dare wel say, ye can
make

good vvomen.

make none euasion. CAN. yes,
and dysproue all your malyciouse
conclusion. But I praye you Ca-
minius, let me aske you a question.
be all the bookes of your mayster
Aristotel of equal authoritie? CA.
ye that be they verely. CAN. In
the instytution of householde ke-
pyng, called Oeconomice, Aristotel
wyrteth in this wise. The compa-
ny moste accoꝝdyng to nature, is
that whiche is ordeyned of manne
and womā, which was constitute,
not to the intente onely to byng
foꝝth their semblable as other bea-
stes pticipatours of nature & with-
out reason, but foꝝ loue specially,
& mutual assystence. And he sayth
also in the same boke, and not far
from thense. This company is not
bycause that eche of them hath in
euery thyng and the same al their
vertues

Defence of

vertues lyke pꝛofytable, but some of theyꝝ vertues seme to be contrary one to an other, and yet in conclusion they agree to one purpose. foꝛ nature made man moꝛe strong and couragious, the woman moꝛe weake fearefull and scrupulouse, to the intente that she foꝛ her febleness shulde be moꝛe circumspecte, the man foꝛ his strengthe moche moꝛe aduenturouse. Be not these the woꝛdes of your maister? howe saye you? C A N I. Where ye saye trueth I wyl not deny you. it is of his sentence the verry pythe and effect. foꝛ he wꝛate in greke ye know well ynough. wherfoꝛe they be not in the same woꝛdes as ye do speke them. C A N. It maketh no matter if I do truely interprete them. But nowe to our purpose. Is perfection and vnperfection in thynges,

good vvomen.

ges, any thyng elles, than abundaunce and lacke of that, whiche is expedient to the ende wherunto nature hath ordeyned them? C A. Aye in good sothe, for I thynke that a true definition. C A N. But let me see, where I called it abundaunce, I mought better haue named it sufficiency. for abundaunce dothe properly signifie more than is necessarie. Sufficiency descriueth the thyng with boundes and limittes, the excesse wherof is called superfluitie, and the lacke may be named necessitie. C A N I. In saythe ye be to curiouse. Verdy the worde neyther made nor marred any thyng of our purpose. for abundaunce and sufficiency is commonly taken for one thyng. C A N. ye and that hath subuerted the order of al thyng. for truely wordes
 used

Defence of

vsed in theyr proper signification;
do byrnye thinges to a playne vn-
derstandynge. And where they be
moche abused and wrested frome
theyr trewe meanyng, they cause
sondyr errours and perpetual con-
tention. But let vs nowre retourne
to our question. Klaye is a kynde
of erthe softe and clammy, and for
those qualyties serueth to make
walles for houses, and to that ende
hath his perfection: Althoughe a
stone be a matter harde and conso-
lidate, and serueth also for walles,
and maketh them stronger to serue
for municion. The horse hath mo-
che strengthe, and therfore is apte
for iourneys & burdens: the shepe
is feble and fearefull, & maye ther-
fore easely be shorne. And yet eche
of these in his kynde hath his per-
fections, To men nature hath gy-
uen

good vvomen.

uen puissaunce in membres, byau-
nes hard and consolidate, the skyn
thicke, perchance mo bones as ye
say, to susteyne outwarde labours.
And to seme the moze terrible, mo-
che heare on theyr visage. To wo-
men she hath gyuen the contrary:
to rhende and intente whiche your
maister reherfed, that her debilyte
shuld make her moze circumspect,
in the keepyng (sayth he) at home
suche thynges as her husbande,
by his puissaunce hath gotten. for
those wordes also he added to the,
whiche are befoze spoken. Is not
that a company accorpyng to na-
ture, where the one dyligentelye
kepeth that, whiche the other by la-
bour prepareth: for what profiteth
it to prepare, where saulfe keepinge
lacketh? In preparyng is labour
or study, of keepyng comineth vse

Gettyng
& keepyng

D

and

Defence of

and commodytie, and therfore to
speke indifferently, it deserueth mo
che more prayse than the geatinge.
But nowe tel me one thyng, wher-
in suppose you dothe a man excell
all other creatures? is it in great-
nesse oꝝ puissance of body? C A N I.
No verply. C A N. Than wherein
suppose ye? C A N I. In that that
his soule is adourned with reason.
C A N. Stop there I praye you a
lyttell season, what call ye reason?
C A N I. Why be ye nowe to lerne,
what thyng is reason? C A N. Ye
by my holy dome. And this is the
cause, for many men leane to their
synguler opinion, iudgyng al that
is contrary, to stande with no rea-
son, wherfore I pray you make me
therof a true definition. C A N I. I
wyl, to content with your fantasy,
although that ye cā do it I knowe
well

good vvomen.

well moche better than **I. Reason**
 is the principall parte of the soule
 diuine and immoꝛtal, wherby man
 dothe discerne good from yll. this
 thyng whyles it discerneth oꝛ seue-
 reth the one frome the other, it is
 called Discretion: whan it taketh
 the one and leaueth the other, it is
 named Election, iugement of some
 men. The exercise therof is called
 Prudence, of some Circumspectiō.
 And yet is euerich of these thinges
 nothyng but reason, whiche to mā
 is so propre, that lackinge it, he lo-
 seth his denomination. **CAN.** In
 good faith ye haue made of reason
 a ryght good descriptiō. And now
I perceyue that the thyng, wher-
 by man excelleth all other creatu-
 res, is reason onely. **CANINI.** Ye
 verily. **CANDI.** What thynke
 you, is reason onely in men? is it

Reason

Discretiō

Election

**Prudence
Circūsp
ectiō.**

D.ii. not

Defence of

not also in womenne suppose youe
CA. yes, that is it naturallie, for
the worde Man, whiche I named,
includeth as well woman as man,
whan it is wrytten or spoken so ge-
nerallie. CAN. I am glad that
I haue founde you so reasonable
in talkynge of Reason. But what
wyttie. saye you by sharpenesse of wytte,
both it not betwene man and beast
make lyke dyuersitie? CANI. No
suerly. for wytte is of the parte of
manne that is mortall, and that is
founden by dayly experyence. For
where the vapours in the body be
pure and suttell, whiche do ascend
into the brayne, the wytt becometh
Sharpe and delycate: And where
they be grosse ponderouse and smo-
ky, the wytte is dull and nothyng
pleasant. And therfoze phisicians
haue experieced by clarifying and
tempe-

good vvomen.

tēperating the corporal humours,
to correcte the wytte, whiche is ey-
ther with grosse matter oppressed,
oꝛ with adust vapours smouldyed
oꝛ choked. But reason mought ne-
uer be brought into a beaste, whi-
che by nature lacketh it. And yet in
dyuerse of them haue bene percey-
ued soo suttill wyttes, that therein
mē haue semed to be of them vain-
quished. CANDI. I thynke it to
be true that ye say. Chan in whom
reason moste dothe appere, ye wyll
assyme, dothe moste excell a beast
in his nature. CANI. ye mayster
Candidus, that maye ye be sure.
CANDIDVS. And ye were agre-
ed whyle ere, that to kepe diligent-
ly that whiche is gotten, is worthy
more prayse than in the gettynge.
CANI. ye, foꝛ there cometh more
effecte of the keepynge. CANDI.

D.iii And

Defence of

And so ye conclude, that the power of reason is more in the prudente and diligent keepynge, than in the valiaunt or politike geatynge: And that Discretion, Election, & Prudence, whiche is all and in euerpe parte reason, doo excell strengthe, wytte, and hardinesse: And consequently they, in whome be those vertues, in that that they haue them, do excell in iuste estimation them that be stronge, hardy, or politike in geatynge of any thyng. C A. ye haue well gathered together all that conclusion. C A N D I. Beholde Caninius, where ye be now: ye haue soo moche extolled reason, that in the respecte thereof bodely strength remaineth as nothinge: for as moch as the corporall powers with powers of the soule can make no cōparison, And
ye

good vvomen.

ye haue not denyed, but that this worde Man, vnto whom reason pertyneth, doth imply in it both man and woman. And agreinge vnto Aristotels sayinge, ye haue confirmed, that prudence, whiche in effect is nothyng but reason, is more aptly applied to the woman, whereby she is more circumspecte in keepinge, as strengthe is to the man, that he maye be more valiaunt in geattyng. And lyke wise ye haue preferred the prudence in keepinge, for the vtilytie therof, before the valyauntnesse in geattyng: And semblably them whiche be prudent in keepinge, before them that be only stronge and hardy in geattyng. And so ye haue concluded, that women, which are prudent in keepinge, be more excellent than men in reason, whiche be onely stronge and

D.iiii, valiant

Defence of

baliaunt in geatynge. And where excellency is, there is moſte perfection. Wherefoze a woman is not a creature vnperſyte, but as it ſeemeth is moze perſyte than man.

CANI. Why, haue ye dalyed herefoze with me all this longe ſeaſon?

CAN. Suerlye I haue vſed neyther dalyaunce nor ſophiſtry: but if ye conſyder it wel, ye ſhal fynde it but a natural inductiō, and plaine to al them that haue any capacitie. But yet haue I ſomewhat moze to ſaye to you. Ye ſayde moze ouer Caninius, that the wyttes of women were apte onely to trifils and ſhewdenes, and not to wiſedome and ciuile policie. I wyll be plaine to you, I am ſory to fynde in your woꝝdes ſuche maner of leudenefſe, I crye you mercy, I wolde haue ſayde ſo moche vngentylnefſe, and
in

good vvomen.

in your owne wordes so moche forgetfulnesse. C A. What meane ye therby? C A N D I. ye haue twyse graunted, that naturall reason is in women as well as in men. C A. ye and what then? C A N. Than haue womē also Discreciō, Election, and Prudence, which do make that wisdomē, whiche perteyneth to gouernaunce. And pcrdy, many artes and necessarye occupations haue ben inuented by women, as I wyll byynge nowe some vnto your remembrance. Latine letters were fyrst founden by Acostrata, called also Carmentis. The. vii. liberall artes and poetry by the. ix. maydens called the Muses. Why was Minerva honored for a goddesse: but bycause she founde fyrste in Grecia, plantynge or settynge of trees: also the vse of armour: &

D, v, as

Defence of

as some doo testifie, she inuented
makinge of fortresses, and many
necessary and notable sciences. Al-
so that the wittes of women be not
vnapt to laudable studies, it appe-
reth by Diotima and Aspasia two
honest maydens, whiche in al par-
tes of philosophy were so well ler-
ned, that Socrates, master to Pla-
to, nothyng disdayned to come to
theyr lessons, and called Diotima
alwaye his maistrisse. Cleobulina,
the daughter of Cleobulus, one of
the seuen wise men of Greece, wrote
diffuse and mistycall questions in
heroicall verses. Also Leontium
a woman, excelled al menne of her
tyme in wysedome and eloquence,
in so moche as she wrote agaynste
Theophrast, the most eloquent dis-
ciple of Aristotel, in womennes de-
fence, whiche booke if it now had
remayneth

good vvomen.

remayned, shuld haue ben sufficy-
 ent to haue put you to silence. If
 the lernynge and wysedome of the
 lady Cassandra, doughter to king
 Priamus, had ben regarded more
 than the counsayl of flatterers, the
 cite of Troye and kyngedome of
 Frigia, hadde lenger remayned,
 And Priamus with his noble suc-
 cession hadde many yeres rayned.
 Beholde our progenitours the an-
 cient Romayns in al extreme dan-
 gers, whan other counsayle vtter-
 ly fayled, dyd not they resoꝝt to the
 bookes of Sibylla Cumana, called
 also Amalthea? & pursuing her ad-
 uise, which she had there declared,
 dyd they not escape the perils whi-
 che thanne were imminente? Hun-
 dredes of suche women are in sto-
 ry es remembꝝed, but foꝝ spede of
 tyme I wyl passe them ouer, sens
 ¶

Defence of

I trust that these be suffyciente to
proue, that the hole kynde of wo-
men, be not vnapt vnto wisdomē
as ye haue supposed. As concer-
nyng strength and valyante cou-
rage, whiche ye surmise to lacke in
them, I could make to you no lesse
replication, and by old stoyes and
late experyence, proue, that in ar-
mies women haue ben found of no
lyttell reputation, but I wyl omit
that for this tyme, for as moche as
to the more parte of wyse menne it
shal not sound moch to theyr com-
mendation : Sauynge that we
nowe haue one example amonge
vs, as well of fortitude as of all o-
ther vertues, whiche in myne opi-
nion, shal not be inconueniente, to
haue at this tyme declared, and so
of this matter to make a conclusi-
on, CANINL And I haue myne
cares

good vvomen.

ears therto prepared. C A N. The best matter is euer good to be spared, vntyl the tale be almoste at an ende, and than shal the herers with the length therof be lytel offended. Syp there dwelleth here by me a lady, late a greate queene and wyfe to Odenatus kynge of Palmyry, whiche is a citie and countrey in Surry, her name is Zenobia: she hath had of our host victoꝝ twice, and nowe late was taken prisoner by Aurelian the emperour, all be it for her nobyltye vertue and courage, she was pardoned of her life, and a fayre house is appoynted to her in this village. she is well learned in greke, and doth competently vnderstand latine, but excellently the Egyptian language. She her selfe techeth her chyldren good letters, and beunge nowe vacante
from

Defence of

frome other busynesse, wryteth as they saye of Alexandria and the orient eloquent stories. I haue bidden her to supper, it wyl not now be longe or she come hyther. And whan ye doo here her, I dare well saye, ye wyl be chaunged frome your opinion, and confesse, that in womenne is bothe courage, constance, and reason. CANINIVS. But I pray you of this matter say to her nothyng. CANDI. Ah, I see well ye be loth to come to a rekenyng. Thus do they all that be of your fascion, In wyle womens absence speke reprochefullye, and whan they be present, flatter them plesauntly. But lo where she cometh, let vs mete with her. Your ladyshyp is very hartely welcome. ZENO. Ye haue caused me to do, that I haue vsed verye seldome.

Can-

good vvomen.

CANDI. what is that madame?
ZENO. To be out of myne owne
house at this tyme of the nyghte.

CAN. I thanke therfore your la-
dyshyp. for I thinke the same, but
I wll promyse you, nothyng shal
come to your helynge or syghte,
but that bothe to here and see may
stand with your wylshyp. ZENO.

That I hartely praye you, for the
remembrance of my princely astate
maye not susteyne wordes of dis-
honesty. And bycause I am nowe
as a priuate personne, I feare the
common successe of famylaritie.

CAN. what is that madame I
praye you hartely. ZENO. for I

drede infamy, I tell you playnely,
more than euer I didde the losse of
my lyberty. CAN. No such thyng

shall happen madame I promyse
you trewely. for here ye shal fynde

no

Defence of

hoo men but of honeste condicion.
ZENOBIA. Yet some in deuising
with ladies, reioysynge to be ther-
foze hadde in a certayne suspition,
wyl by the way of dalyaunce con-
uey from them some thyng, whi-
che beinge shewed, do ingender in
the beholders some dishonest opy-
nion. Dyaerse be not ashamed, to
make theyr aduant, that they haue
receyued, whiche of her that they
speke of, was neuer ones profered.
These thynges master Candidus
haue made me afrayde, to come to
suppers and bankettes. CANI.
Mary that is well sayde. And yet
some tyme suche thynges haue ben
sene offered. CANDI. Perchance
of some yonge maydens which did
it of courtesy, yet moch more haue
ben asked that haue ben denyed.
I haue knowen it my selfe, I pro-
myse

good vvomen.

myse you faythfully. ZENO BIA.
 Cruely I lyke not suche maner of
 folp, I haue ben brought vp in o-
 ther study. CANDI. I praye you
 madame, let me aske you a questi-
 on: but fyyste pleaseth it you to syt
 downe and reste you: for I trowe
 your supper is not yet redye. ZE-
 NO. Nowe what is your demaunde,
 speke on hardily. CAN. Of what
 age was your ladyshyp, whan first
 ye were married. ZENO. Twen-
 ty yeres and aboue. CANDI. It
 was great pitie, that ye soo longe
 taryed. ZENO. But it was the
 moze for my comunodytie. for I
 knewe the better what longed to
 my duety. CANDI. Your duety
 madame, what meane ye therby.
 ZENO BIA. For by my studye in
 mozal philosophy, wherin I spent
 the yeres betwen systene and twen-
 ty, I

Defence of

ty, I perceyued, that without prudence and cōstancy, womē mought be broughthe lyghtely into errour & folp, and made therfoze vnmete for that compayne, wherunto they were ordeyned: I meane, to be assistance & comfort to man through theyr fidelitie, whiche other bestes are not, excepte they be by the force of man therto constrayned. I found also, that Iustyce teacheth vs womenne, to honour our husbandes nexte after god: which honour resteth in due obediēce, wherby mutuall loue betwyrte theym is in a moze feruence. for vndoubtedly no woman hym loueth, whose hate or displeasure she nothyng feareth. Also Justice restrayneth vs to doo any thyng, whiche is not semely. By fortitude are we styll kept in a vertuose constancy, as wel in resistinge

Iustice.

Fortitude.

good vvomen.

sisting affections and wanton persuasion, as also to susteyne (whan they do happen) afflyctions pacyently. But in a woman, no vertue is equall to Temperaunce, whereby in her wordes and dedes she alway vseth a iust moderation, knowinge whan tyme is to speke, and whan to kepe silence, whan to be occupped and whan to be merye. And if she measure it to the wyll of her husbände, she dothe the more wysely: except it may tourne them bothe to losse or dyshoneste. yet than shuld she seme rather to giue him wise counsaile, than to appere dislobedient or sturpy. In euery of these thynges consisted my duety, whiche I shulde not soo well haue knowen, if to my husbände I had soner be wedded. CANI. In dede ye had ben paste lernynge therof,

Tempera
in women

C.ii. whan

Defence of

whan ye ones had ben bedded. z E.
In good fayth ye saye trewely. fo:
whan I had ben out of the dreade
of my father (who kepte me in this
study continuallye) and had ones
tasted the pleasaunt deuises, whi-
che are prouyded fo: queenes and
other great ladvess, ye maye well
suppose I shulde sone haue loste,
that delectation, whiche I had in
study. C A N. Ye saye euen truthe
by the faythe of my body. but ma-
dame, after that ye were maryed,
what profite was to you, the know-
lege of letters? Z E N O. Noche,
mayster Candidus I promyse you
verply. fo: durynge the lyfe of my
noble husband of famouse memo-
ry, I was neuer harde o: sene, say
o: do any thyng, whiche mought
not contente hym, o: omytte any
thyng, whiche shulde delite hym.
suche

good vvomen.

such circumspection, good lerning
mynstred vnto me, that in hun-
tyng and other pastymes, I re-
tayned alway suche grauitie, that
of any dyssolute appetyte, none
coulde conceyue of me any suspici-
on: and yet my lernynge was had
of none honeste man in any dery-
spon. But after the deathe of my
husbande, I founde of lernynge a
meruaylouse treasure. For whan
I consydered the state of thynges,
whiche thanne hapned to gether,
what daunger was to the realme
imynnente for lacke of a gouer-
nour, and that my chyldren for
theyr tender youthe, shulde be lyt-
tell regarded, and I beinge a wo-
man, shoulde nothyng be feared.
Also what tutours my chyldren
shulde haue, it was verye vncer-
tayne, Ambicion alway raigninge

C.iii.

iii

Defence of

in euery countrey, whiche can not gladly suffer in any one personne suche maner of souerayntie, that vnder the name of protection, he shulde haue in subiection all the nobilitie. And althoughe that suche one mought happen to be, yet haupnge in remembraunce as wel auncient histories as late exam-
ples, I darre, leste in soo greatte
authoritie Ambition and Auarice
mought cause men to forget theyr
obedience truste and fydelitie. I
considered also, that the realme of
Palmeyr, was enuironed with en-
nemyes. for on the one syde was
the hoste of the Romaynes, which
alwaye awayed to fynde oportu-
nitie, to inuade my realme, and to
subdue it vnder their Empire. The
theues of Araby were on the other
syde, whiche all redye were entred
the

Ambition.
Auarice.

good vvomen.

the marches, and spoyled the countrey. The kynge of Media, to be discharged of his trybute, ioynd with our ennemyes, wyllynge to bypunge my realme in perpetuall captiuitie. Was it any meruayle, if all these thynges dyd exceedyngly trouble me? C A N. But fynally madame, what remedye founde ye? Z E N O. After that I hadde a lyttell bethoughte me, I determyned to prepare remedies quickly, and to susteyne fortune at al times patiently. And to the intente that the name of a woman, shulde not amonge the people be had in contempt, I vsed so my procedynges, that none of them mought be sayd, to be done womanly. Wherefore I sate alway abrode amonge my nobles and counsaylours, and sayde myne opinion, so that it seemed to

E.iii. them

Defence of

theym all, that it stode with good reason. I came often times among the people, and remembred vnto them, the libertie and honour whiche they had receyued, by the excellent prowesse of my noble husband, shewynge to theym my chyldren, whiche for tender age thanne were but feble, exhortynge theym with sondry orations to reteine theyr fidelitie. I visited al the hole realme and the marches, reedified fortreffys, and newe made also sondry municions. More ouer, I caused good lawes to be publyshed, obsetynge them fyrste in myne owne householde, and caused them in al other places to be well executed. I made Iustice chiefe ruler of myne affection, and in all consultations wolde I be present, where I herde all other speke fyrste, that I wolde not

good vvomen.

not be ignozant : and than shewed
 myne aduise, wherin I semed, not
 to be negligente. Touchynge my
 seruauntes I vsed such a dilygent
 scrutiny, that they were alway per-
 sonnes of synguler honestye. By
 this maner industry I quietly go-
 uerned the realme of Balmyre.
 And also added moche more to
 myne Empire, not soo moche by
 force, as by renoume of iuste and
 politike gouernaunce, whiche all
 men had in suche admyzation, that
 dyuerse of our said enemies, whi-
 che agaynste the realme erste dyd
 conspyre, and had inuaded my iu-
 risdyction, chafe rather to leaue
 theyr hostilitie, and to remayne in
 our subiiection, than to retourne to
 theyr owne countrey. to the whiche
 wysedome and polycy I attapned
 by the study of noble philosophye.
 Also

Defence of

Also therby I acquired such magnanimitie, that nowe I kepe in as strait subiection al affections, and passions, as the Romiaynes doo nowe me and my chyl dren. All this considered, my studie was to me moche more cominodious bycause it was so longe or I were marped. Wherefore I maye conclude that I had well tarped. CAN. Ye haue sayde very well by the fayth of my body. And all that ye haue spoken I haue befoze hard as wel of your frendes as of your ennemies confessed. Howe saye you Caninius, be you any thyng chaunged in your opinion? CANI. I wolde neuer haue looked for suche a conclusion, I see well inoughe, that women beinge well and vertuously bybought vp, do not onely with men participate in reason, but some
also

good vvomen.

also in fidelitie and constauncie be
equall vnto them. CANDIDVS.
Madame, your supper is redye,
may it lyke you to enter in toward
it. ZE. With ryght good wil; but
yet if this gentylman hath aught
to saye agaynste women, I am not
vnprouided for to defende them.

CANI. Noo madame, I am by
your ladyshyp all redy satisfied, he
is wyse that with reason is shor-
tely contented. And where Reason
serueth not, sylence is prayesed.

ZENOBIA. Yet a good mynde,
in sylence, is euer well occupied.

CANDIDVS. And he that thyn-
keth well, and speketh treuthe is
moste to be loued. Madame I wil
leade you the waye into my house.

ZENOBIA. With good wyll I
folowe you. CANI. The conclu-
sion is good, where bothe partes
are

Defence of
are pleased. And if they bothe be
wple, it maketh no matter though
fooles be offended.

Thus endeth the defence
of good women.

LONDINI inædibus Tho-
ma Bertheleti typis
impress.

CVM PRIVILEGIO.

Ad imprimendum
solum.

ANNO, M. D. XL.

¹⁹/_c *Obsolete Words in the foregoing Treatise.*

1. *Knache* me that *Kut*. i.e. *Crack* or *break* &c. being deriv'd from the *Belgic* or *Low-Dutch knacken*, To break, or *knagen* To bite.

2. And it seemeth that ye lacke teth to hold in your tongue that it go not to lavelse. This must mean to excess or beyond all bounds, and in my opinion is derived from the *Anglo-Saxon* word *Lyfan*, *Libertas*.